

# The GIRLA HORSE AND A DOG

By  
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CHAPTER XIV.—During the day and night the two men, Broughton and Hiram, were busy with the shaft, including an attempt to drown them out.

CHAPTER XV.—Almost ready to give up, Broughton is heartened by Hiram's assertion that the sounds of the shaft must have reached Atropia, and an investigating party will soon appear.

CHAPTER XVI.—The shaft continues, Broughton vainly endeavoring to induce Hiram to abandon Broughton. He finally announces his purpose to destroy the shaft, with its defenders. They defy him.

CHAPTER XVII.—Using dynamite, the besiegers have twenty and Broughton at their last gasp when the rescuing party from Atropia arrives, headed by Broughton's acquaintance, Beasley, who is Hiram's nephew. With the party is Jennie. As an explanation of her disappearance she hands Broughton a letter from the Old Cinnabar, which she had taken to have recorded, a precaution he had neglected. Beasley arrests Broughton for the theft and destruction of the construction car.

CHAPTER XVIII.—A charge of dynamite aimed by Broughton at the shaft-house exploded in the mine, and the mystery of the flood is revealed. The water had been deliberately introduced into the shaft and arrangements made to keep it there, with the object of discouraging and ultimately "freezing out" Broughton's grandfather, Stanford and Hiram. Broughton discovers the method and destroys it. Broughton announces his intention of working the mine, with Daddy Hiram as his partner and Beasley as his foreman, the matter of the construction car being forgotten. To his intense disgust, Jennie induces Broughton to promise not to prosecute Broughton, the only possible inference being that she loves the fellow.

CHAPTER XIX.—With the aid of Beasley, Broughton interests capital in the mine, and the future of the Old Cinnabar seems assured.

CHAPTER XX.—Realizing his debt to Hiram, and to Jennie, for the recovery of his property, Broughton assures the girl they appeal to our sympathies.

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they do, I reckon I'll be good-by, fair world, for a couple of us men and mighty good dog. I'm telling you, Stannie, son, the 'shot' that comes down through that hole fixes us as plenty. Sufferin' Methusalem! what



The Crash Came Almost Immediately.

all is the folks down yonder at 'Tropia a-dreamin' about, to let all this bangin' and whangin' go on up here without comin' up to find out what's makin' it?"

The Atropia that I remembered so so nearly moribund that I didn't wonder it wasn't making any stir in 'out behalf; so, when a few pattering rifle shots which seemed to originate on the great bench below began to sift in among the bomb echoes, I took it that Bullerton had divided his force and was trying to rattle us two ways at once. As for that, however, the bigger bombardment kept us from speculating very curiously upon anything else. Two more of the giant crackers had fallen to the right of us, one of them into the wreck of the blacksmith shop, to send up a spouting volcano of scrap which fell a second or so later in a thunderous rain; and then.

For a flitting instant it seemed as if it must drop squarely in front of the iron shield under which we were jammed—in which case even the undertaker wouldn't have been needed—not any whatsoever, as Daddy Hiram would have said. But at the critical point in its flight the hurtling thing "ticked" the top of the hoist frame and its downward course was deflected the needed half-breath, causing it to come down beyond the machinery, and not on our side of things. Nevertheless, we were covering in anticipation of a blast which would most likely leave the entire machinery aggregation over bodily upon us when the explosion came.

We saw the belching column of flame and gas going skyward beyond the machinery barrier, taking a full half of the roof with it, as if the blast had come from the mouth of a gigantic cannon. We were dazed and deafened by the shock, and half choked by the fumes, but neither of us was so far gone as not to hear distinctly a prolonged and rumbling crash like the thunder of a small Niagara, coming after the smash!

"The shaft!" shrieked Daddy Hiram, in a thin, choked voice. "It went off 'down in the shaft! And, say!—what-all's that we're a-listenin' to now?"

If there had been a dozen of the bombs raining down I don't believe the threat of them would have kept us from bursting out of our dodge-hole to go and see what had happened in the mine shaft. But before we could determine anything more than that the mouth of the shaft was completely hidden under a mass of wreckage, and that the mysterious Niagara roar, dwindled somewhat, but yet hollowly audible, was still going on under the concealing mass of broken timbers and sheet-iron, there was a masterful interruption. Shots, yells, shoutings and hot curses told us that a fierce battle of some kind was raging just outside of our wrecked fortress; whereupon Daddy Hiram began pawing his way to the door, yelling like a man suddenly gone dotty.

"That there's old ole Beasley—dad-blame his old hide!" he chattered. "There ain't nary 'other man in the Timpany's 'at can cuss like that. He's come with a posse, and they're layin' out Charley Bullerton's crowd!"

There was a fine little tableau spreading itself out for us when we had clambered over the wreckage and had withdrawn the wooden bar and hung the door wide. Daddy Hiram had called the turn and named the trump. The large, desperado-looking man who had once interviewed me at Angels, and a little later had paused in his combing of the mountains in search of me to usurp my place at the Twombly's breakfast table, this bewhiskered giant, with a goodish bunch of followers—hard-boiled to a man, they looked to be—had surrounded a fair half of the would-be business and were huddled together with a celerity that was, as I have described as, running up from the brink of the abrupt cliff overlooking the mine plant.

"They'll get the range, after a while," Daddy grunted. "And when

led, to save up his troubles and tell them to the judge.

As we emerged from our wrecked fortress, other members of the posse were scattering to round up the outlying bomb-throwers, who had apparently taken to the tall timber in a panic-stricken effort to escape. Down on the bench below there were horses and horse-holders; and among the horses one whose boyish-looking rider was just slipping from the saddle. While I was wondering vaguely why the Angels town marshal had let a mere boy come along on such a battle errand, the boyish figure ran up the road and darted in among us to fling itself into Daddy Hiram's arms, gurgling and half crying and begging to be told if he was hurt.

I didn't know at the time how much or how little the big marshal knew of the various and mixed involvements which were crisscrossing right there in the early morning sunshine on the old Cinnabar dump head; but I do know that he quickly turned his captures over to some of his deputies and had them promptly hustled down stage and off scene. While this was going on I was merely waiting for my gun, and I got it, or thought I got it when the boy who wasn't a boy slipped from Daddy's arms and faced me.

"I'm not hurt, either," I ventured to say, hoping that the brain storm had subsided sufficiently to make me visible. "Welcome home, Miss Twombly—or should I say Mrs. Bullerton?"

The look she gave me was just plain deadly; you wouldn't think that violet-blue eyes could do it, but they can. Then she drew a folded paper from somewhere inside of her clothes and held it out to me.

"There is the deed to your mine, Mr. Broughton," she said, nippingly, and with a fairly tragical emphasis on the courtesy title. "You wouldn't take the trouble to go to Copah and get it recorded, so I thought I'd better do it. 'E hope you'll pardon me for being so forward and meddlesome."

It was the super-climax of the entire Arabian-Nights business, and because my feelings would no longer be denied their rightful fling, I sat down on the shaft-house doorstep and shouted and laughed like a fool. But after all, it was Mr. Isaac Beasley, deputy sheriff and marshal of Angels, who put the weather-piece upon the fantastic scene.

"I been lookin' round for right smart while," he told me gruffly. "When you get plum' over your head and feel that you're needin' a little snash over the hills for exercise, you can come along with me and go to jail for stealin' that railroad car."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### The Hold-Up.

Beasley left me sitting on the doorstep—I've a notion he had run out of handcuffs, else he might have clapped a pair of them on me—while he started his posse down to Atropia with the captured riders and their leader. When he came back we took time, Daddy and I and the big marshal, to size up the damage that had been wrought, and beyond that, to dig into



"Hooray!" He yelled. "Charley Bullerton's Dressed Your Mine for Ye!"

the mystery of the continuous grumbling roar which was still ascending out of the wreck-covered mine shaft.

Beasley stayed with us, waiting, as I took it, to get his breakfast before he ran me off to jail, and the three of us fell to work clearing away the fallen timbers and roofing iron. Daddy Hiram leading the attack and being the first to stick his head through what remained of the shaft's mouth.

"Hooray!" he yelled, his voice sounding as if it came from the inside of a barrel; and then again, "Hooray, Stannie, son—by the ghosts of old Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, Charley Bullerton's done gone and done eggs-zactly what he said he could do—dressed your mine for ye! Climb in here and take a look at her. She's empty—empty as a gump-ton, at that, she ain't got to be, very long!"

A few more minutes of the strenuous toil cleared the pit mouth so that we could all see. The bomb which had exploded in the shaft had wrought a complete transformation. The standing flood, which all of our pumping

attacks had failed to lower by so much as a fraction of an inch, was gone, and with it had vanished the two big centrifugals, the platform upon which they had stood, and their pipe connections. Gone, likewise, was the greater part of the heavy wooden shaft-lining. A little of this remained in the upper part of the shaft, but from a point possibly twenty-five feet down, there was nothing but the bare rock sides of the square pit swept by the receding flood.

As for the hollow roaring noise which had followed the crash of the explosion, and which still continued, there was a good and sufficient reason plainly visible from the pit's mouth. Some twenty feet down, and on the eastern side of the shaft, a stream of water big enough to run a good-sized hydro-electric plant was pouring into the perpendicular cavern, and it was its plunging descent into the bowels of the earth which was making the minute thunder.

Beasley was the first to find speech. "Where the blazes is all that water comin' from?" he exploded.

"That's just what we're going to find out!" I barked. "Can you and Daddy handle my weight in a rope sling?"

They both protested that they could handle two of me if necessary, and a sling was quickly rigged and I was lowered into the pit. At the nearer view thus obtained, some of the mysteries were instantly made clear. The reason why the wooden boxing disappeared below a certain point in the shaft was that it had never extended any farther down. It had been merely a box with a bottom!—and all those pipe-dream impressions which had tried to register themselves on the day when I had my struggle with the suction-pipe octopus were instantly translated into facts. I could have sworn, then, that there was a bottom in the box, and there was a bottom. And that other impression—that I had encountered an rushing stream of ice-cold water in the chilling depths; here was the stream; a foot-thick, never-failing cataract, pouring in through a perfectly good and substantial conduit of twelve-inch iron pipe!

In a flash the whole criminal mystery involving the ostensibly flooded mine was illuminated for me. "Haul away!" I called to the two above; and when they had drawn me up to the pit's mouth and I could get upon my feet, I slipped at Daddy and the marshal to come on, and led them in an out-door race along the mine ledge to the eastward; a hundred-yards dash which brought us to the banks of the swift little mountain torrent in the right-hand gulch.

A brief search revealed precisely what I was expecting to find; what anyone in possession of the facts precedent would have expected to find. In the middle of a small pool slightly upstream from the path level—a pocketed bit of water neatly screened and half hidden by a growth of low-branching spruces—we saw a cone-shaped whirlpool swirl into which a good third of the stream flow was vanishing. Below this pool an apparently accidental heaping of rocks formed a small dam which kept the little reservoir full.

Without a word, Daddy Hiram and the Angels marshal plunged recklessly into the stream and with their bare hands tore away the loose-rock dam. With the removal of the slight barrier and the consequent clearing of the source of the stream, the pocket reservoir immediately sucked dry, the inlet of the cataracting pipe was exposed, and the secret of the flooded Cinnabar was a secret no longer.

The scheme which had been elaborated and set in motion to "soak" Grandfather Jasper was a premeditated "holdup." The Cinnabar, in operation and producing to its capacity, was worth, so Beasley asserted, all that my grandfather had paid for it, and more. But with the branch railroad built to its very door, its value would be doubled. Two alternatives had thus presented themselves to the owners, who were Cripple Creek mining speculators who had bought in the stock at a low figure while the main vein was as yet unexplored; they could go on mining the ore and storing it against the time when the railroad, with its cost-reducing advantages, should come along; or they could suspend operations for the same length of time, setting the losses of a shut-down over against the increased profits when they should start up again.

With our discoveries of the morning the plan of the robbery became perfectly plain. Some giant of finance among the speculators had evolved a scheme by which the mine not only might be shut down during the interval of waiting for the railroad to build over the bench, but at the same time be made to yield a bumper crop of profits.

Taking its various steps in their order, the first move in the game was to sell the mine to Grandfather Jasper while it was still a going proposition; and this was done. But one of the conditions of the sale (Beasley told us this) was that the selling corporation should continue to operate the mine, not as a lessee, but under a contract by which the operating company should receive a certain percentage of the output; an arrangement which gave the holdup artists ample opportunity to prepare for the coup de main.

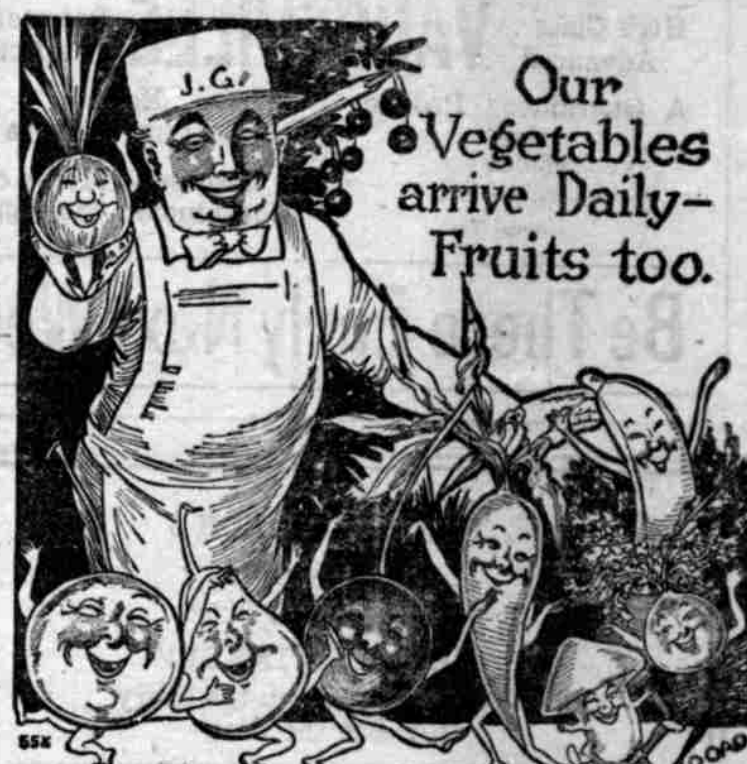
How these preparations were made, and the secret of them kept from leaking out, still remained one of the unsolved mysteries, though Beasley suggested that probably imported workmen were employed, and that the work

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